



## UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

March 19, 2007

## MEMORANDUM

To: Campus Planning Committee (CPC)

From: Christine Taylor Thompson, Planning Associate  
University Planning

Subject: **Record of the March 15, 2007 CPC Meeting**

Attending: Carole Daly (Chair), Frances Dyke, Michael Fifield, Ally Frueauf, Bill Harbaugh, Stan Jones, Douglas Kennett, Rich Linton, Gregg Lobisser, Randall McGowan, Garrett McSorley, Dennis Munroe, Chris Ramey, Dale Smith, Greg Stripp

Guests: Vince Babcock (Facilities Services), Jane Brubaker (Facilities Services), Roger Kerrigan (Facilities Services), John Nicols (History), James Tice (Architecture)

Staff: Christine Thompson (University Planning)

Agenda: Site Selection Process – Follow-up comments  
Obelisk/Horologium Project Siting – Preliminary Review and Comments

**1. Site Selection Process – Follow-up comments**

The chair said a smaller group of committee members and staff met as a follow up to the full committee's March 1, 2007 discussion about the site-selection process. Staff will present ideas to resolve procedural issues and to better describe site-specific requirements to the full committee at a later date.

**2. Obelisk/Horologium Project Siting – Preliminary Review and Comments**

Background: John Nicols, History Department, presented the obelisk/horologium project as defined in the meeting mailing. The project's purpose is to create a replica of an ancient horologium for use as an educational tool that demonstrates how to measure time. It is also an example of how to combine science and aesthetics on campus. Numerous faculty, staff, and students have been involved in the project, and President Frohnmayer has given his support.

Jim Tice, Architecture Department, reviewed the design of the obelisk and ground markings for the proposed Memorial Quadrangle site as described in the meeting mailing. The markings will be limited to accommodate a time range of 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. to fit the site. The proposed obelisk is reminiscent of a vertical element evident in Ellis Lawrence's proposed 1923 campus plan model. If properly designed and sited, the

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obelisk would relate to Lawrence's original scheme of a formal outdoor room. A full-scale model will be constructed to test sites. It must be in place for six months to verify placement of ground markings.

The proposed site is at the north end of the quadrangle because it is the sunniest part of the site, it is better associated with the 13th Avenue urban environment than the established ensemble of the oak trees and Knight Library at the southern end which should be preserved, and it is similar to Lawrence's proposed placement although it is closer to 13th Avenue. Historically, obelisks mark important places in urban settings.

The project has gained support from a wide mix of campus constituents because it is a combination of the humanities and sciences.

The obelisk will be about ten meters tall possibly constructed of cast bronze (which is the material used for the prominent *Pioneer* and *Pioneer Mother* sculptures on campus). The ground markings will be simplified on the outside edges and installed below grass level so they will be visible only when standing directly overhead.

Staff reviewed applicable *Campus Plan* policies and patterns as described in the meeting mailing.

Discussion: In response to a member's question, John said the ground markings likely will be made of metal or possibly vegetation.

In response to a member's question, John and Jim said they hope to produce an exact replica of the original version from antiquity but at half scale and using a material that is less costly and more durable than granite. Bronze is currently the preferred material because it can be cleaned easily and it will not be climbable. The pedestal will incorporate a dedication or interpretive information.

A member questioned the obelisk's connection to campus—does it make sense to transport something with a strong historical reference from elsewhere to campus? Jim said other campuses have obelisks, but the greatest value stems from the project's historical and astronomical teaching potential. Jim added that he hopes the obelisk can represent something beyond the capital campaign that is aspirational in nature as was historically the case with obelisks.

In response to a member's question, John and Roger Kerrigan from Facilities Services said the proposed siting should not interfere with adjacent trees and their future growth. However, if the obelisk is moved south, the historic oaks would shade the site.

A member said it seemed more appropriate to site the obelisk at the Johnson Lane axis intersection as shown in Lawrence's 1923 model. John said many alternate locations were considered and the obelisk model will be movable so various sites can be tested. The intersection seemed to be more intrusive and the solar axis is not as good. However, another member agreed that the intersection location would be more intrusive—it would impact two open spaces.

Chris clarified that staff provided initial feedback about possible sites stating that the proposed site was a possibility. However, staff did not endorse the proposed site as implied in the letter from John to the president. The site cannot be selected until the Campus Planning Committee has an opportunity to engage in the review process.

In response to a member's questions, staff said historic plans and past intentions should not determine future development although they can help us understand Lawrence's design intent. Existing historic features, which are the basis for National Register listing, should be of primary consideration.

A member said it is important to keep the Memorial Quadrangle functional for multiple uses such as informal gatherings and formal events. The south area is the most accessible place for staging events. Jim and another member said the obelisk should not interfere with commencement activities.

A member said the design of the base is important. People will be attracted to the obelisk, so perhaps the base should be designed as a sitting area. John said a reflecting pool was considered but it seemed more appropriate to minimize site intrusion. It is likely that an interpretation sign will be needed nearby. Jim added that a hard ground surface immediately surrounding the base likely will be necessary to accommodate foot traffic.

In response to a member's question about making the feature understandable to the general public, John said the ground markers will contain key information in a discreet manner as shown at the temporary site in the McKenzie plaza.

A member said it is important to carefully design the vertical element to ensure that the intended symbolism is clear.

A member expressed concern about the proposed site, which already works very well in design and use. It is the most successful and vital place on campus. Students heavily use the proposed site. Even minimal change will add clutter and interpretive materials will add to the clutter. It is more appropriate to place the obelisk in an area that needs site repair and definition such as the area west of the EMU near 13th Avenue and University Street.

A member applauded the interdisciplinary nature of the project. However, he expressed strong concern about the proposed site. The 1923 Lawrence model should not be used to justify its placement, which is not the same location. The Memorial Quadrangle is not broken; in fact, it is the most successful open space on campus. The proposed obelisk would distract attention from the quadrangle—it does not respect the historic integrity of the space. In addition, the ground markings would be visible from 13th Avenue due to the site's slope thus adding to the clutter. Seasonal plantings would be very intrusive and should not be considered as ground markers. Also, moving the proposed site to the Johnson Lane intersection would be worse because it would intrude upon two open spaces. Numerous Landscape Architecture faculty share these concerns.

A member said he was not concerned about the specific siting. Options with adequate solar access and public visibility to support the project's educational intent are limited. It is essential, however, that the selected site does not interfere with the area's recreational use. In particular, the ground markings must accommodate activities.

A member said the project is very exciting—it will be a great inspiration to students. He supported the Memorial Quadrangle site because it is central, and the obelisk would make the site more inviting to students particularly if a seating element is integrated into the base. However, he expressed concern about the ground markings saying that

landscape elements should not be used. Instead, discreet brass markings would be more appropriate.

A member noted his support for the project's concept, which brings a visual example of history and science to the campus. An appropriate site must be open; therefore, it is clear that a designated open space is the only choice. Another agreed but said the Memorial Quadrangle is a terrible choice. Other potential options such as the Science Green and the promenade near the Living-Learning Center should be carefully explored. It is extremely important that the committee be respectful of what has come before, particularly places like the Memorial Quadrangle for which this campus is known.

Another member supported the project. Although he had some questions about the proposed site, he could see potential.

John and Jim said the project should not become a divisive monument. If they should consider other locations, they would like to know which ones. The area near the intersection of 13th Avenue and University Street was not considered earlier due to limited solar access. Recent loss of trees, however, makes this site worth reviewing even though this is not an optimal location because the site does not have strong architectural definition typically found in most historic obelisk settings (e.g., as found in traditional Beaux-Arts designs). In addition, the Southwest Campus Green was considered but future School of Music expansion would interfere with solar access. A member added that the Southwest Campus Green is also a programmed recreation field. Sites should focus on open spaces used for leisure. Finally, the Arena site likely will have good solar access but development plans are too unknown to count this as an option.

A member said the committee should look at least 50 years into the future when considering appropriate sites. This project could help define and improve an open space that is not yet well established. It could serve as the impetus for a much larger open-space improvement project. Another member added that ideally the obelisk could serve as a wayfinding marker at an intersection of two axes.

A guest said the Science Green site has potential since many existing trees had to be removed to accommodate new construction.

The chair summarized the committee's comments. Overall there is unanimous support for the project. However, there are serious concerns about the proposed Memorial Quadrangle site. Other options should be carefully considered taking into account the committee's comments.

Action: No formal action was requested. The committee's comments will be considered as the project moves forward.

Please contact this office if you have questions.

- cc. Vince Babcock, Facilities Services  
Genevieve Hope Beecher, Religious Studies (PLC Building Manager)  
George Bleekman, Facilities Services  
Greg Bothun, Physics  
Jane Brubaker, Facilities Services  
Judy Byrum, Knight Library (Building Manager)

Shelley Carlson, Sociology (PLC Building Manager)  
Suzanne Clark, English (University Senate)  
Anya Dobrowolski, Architecture  
Stephen Duff, Architecture  
Brenda Dutton, Anthropology (Condon Building Manager)  
K.J. Fairchild, Political Science (PLC Building Manager)  
Jennie Hagenberger, Interior Architecture  
Roger Kerrigan, Facilities Services  
Kate Kevern, Honors College (Chapman Building Manager)  
Tim King, Facilities Services  
Carol Kleinheksel, Classics (PLC Building Manager)  
Sandra Knauber, Geography (Condon Building Manager)  
Kim Lilley, Academic Learning Services (PLC Building Manager)  
TK McDonald, Philosophy (PLC Building Manager)  
Kurt Neugebauer, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art (Building Manager)  
John Nicols, History  
Steve Nystrom, Eugene Planning  
Cathy O'Grady, Folklore (PLC Building Manager)  
Barbara Oppliger, Publications (Chapman Building Manager)  
Debbie Otley, Graduate School (Chapman Building Manager)  
Allan Price, Advancement  
Marilyn Reid, English (PLC Building Manager)  
Linda Steller, Economics (PLC Building Manager)  
Jim Tice, Architecture  
Robert Zimmerman, Physics